

Architecture and Construction Management at Queens University Belfast

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Title: Regional Cultural Centre



Abstract

The Regional Cultural Centre in Letterkenny is a new 2000sqm arts center containing theatre, galleries, workshops and ancillary offices. The site is set back from the street, on high ground with good views. The form and envelope of the building was derived from geometrically connecting the site with the town's two other main public buildings, the Cathedral (1901) and new Civic Offices (2002, also designed by MacGabhann Architects). This geometrical connection or vectors informed the geometry and shape of the building. This urban matrix of geometrically connecting three corner stones of society, namely the ecclesiastical headquarters, the administrative head quarters and the art centre helps to improve the town planning and urban design of the disparate and chaotic development that Letterkenny has become.

The large cantilever, which houses a 300sqm gallery, is aligned towards the Civic Offices, marks the entrance, and signifies a change of direction of the pedestrian route past the building, like a modern day obelisk.

The circulation routes and stairs internally provide views towards the civic offices and cathedral, thus reinforcing the connection between the three buildings and helps visitors make some sense of Letterkenny as an urban center. The main stairs and vertical circulation are contained behind the large glazed foyer, which is framed to be viewed externally like a proscenium stage, with visitors to the building passively acting their routes through the building.

Principal Investigator:

Tarla MacGabhann
Antoin MacGabhann

Co-Investigators:

Nanni Grau
Niels Merschbrock

Client:

Donegal County Council

Date (start – finished)

2004-2008

Outputs/publications:

Building Design Article (Nov 07), Architecture (Nov/Dec 07), Perspective (Dec 07), Architectural Review (June 08), The Sunday Times - Culture (July 08), RIBA Journal (Oct 08), The Irish Times (April 09), Full Irish - New Architecture in Ireland (2010)

Awards

AAI Awards, Architectural Association of Ireland, 2009 - Special Mention

Winner of 'Between €2million and €20million' category at Opus Architecture & Construction Awards (2008)

Long listed for RIBA European Award 2008